

*“Reason, is and ought to be the slave of the passions...”
Treatise, 415; “Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of
the whole world to the scratching of my finger...” Enquiry, 416.*

A. Desires & Other Passions Motivate us to Action:

1. Desires & passions are “*original existences*.”
2. In contrast: Beliefs & ideas are “copies that represent the world.
3. Beliefs & Ideas are impressions of sensation; they are “*copies*” that represent the world. Whereas a good or true copy will represent the world accurately, a bad copy will not.
4. Reason can’t motivate people to action.
5. Morals can “*excite passions*” & produce or prevent actions.

B. Reason has not capacity to motivate people to act.

1. Morality can’t be grounded in reason because it has no capacity to motivate people to act.
2. Only feelings, desires, & other passions motivate people to act.
3. Thus, morality must be grounded, not in reason, but in desires & passion.

C. Moral conflicts are between feelings & desires, not reason & desire.

D. Desires & Passions can’t be true or false because they are original existences.

E. Evidences of Desires & Other Passions Motivating Us to Act:

1 Impressions of reflection (desires and other passions) clearly motivate us to act.
Ex. *To desire a kiss from my spouse is to be motivated to get one.*

2. Beliefs (impressions of sensation) are not original existences but are copies. a. A belief is true if it accurately copies the way things really are & it is false if it does not. b. Beliefs are not original existences for they are copies that can be true or false. c. Unlike desires, such beliefs can’t motivate because they copy, or represent, the worth that desires & other passions motivate us to change.

In sum, desires & other passions can motivate but are original existences that can’t be true or false whereas beliefs are not original existences; they are copies that can be true or false.

F. Reason is just the discovery of the truth & falsehood of beliefs & is an effective tool to allow us determine the most effective means to to whatever our passions & sentiments lead us to desire.

1. It is unreasonable to maintain a belief if it can readily be shown to be false & reasonable to maintain a belief that can be shown to be true.
2. Since desires can’t be true or false, they also can’t be reasonable or unreasonable.
4. Since reason is the discovery of the true & falsity of beliefs, & beliefs can’t motivate, it seems to follow that reason can’t motivate people to act.
5. Only desires & other passions can motivate, but reason deals with beliefs rather than with desires and passions, hence reason can’t motivate.
6. Reason is best understood as a tool which will allow us to determine the most effective means to whatever our ends our sentiments & passions lead us to desire; it helps avoid less effective means; it allows us to act more effectively on our passions & desires.

“Freedom is only an idea of reason whose objective reality is in itself questionable.”

A. Morality is Grounded in Reason, not in desires, & sentiments, & other passion.

B. We have the unity capacity to cause events through free will.

C. Morality is a matter for all rational beings: To be free is to be moral.

D. Autonomy & Free will are one & the same.

1. Since a will that is free must be a will that gives itself to its own law, autonomy of the will and free will are one and the same.

E. A will is free when & only when it follows moral laws.

F. Morality follows from the concept of free will.

1. A person motivated only by inclination is no more free than a person being thrown from a plane.
2. Such a person’s inclinations are determined to be what they are by nature, in accordance with natural laws, & the actions of such a being are caused by its inclinations.
3. Thus, its actions are determined by natural forces outside of itself-it is not free.

G. Evidences of a free will:

Free will can’t be proven [Third Antinomy]:

1. A person is free if it thinks of itself as free when it acts. We can only presuppose free will & refute objections to it.
2. While it is impossible to prove free will from experience, because our minds are constituted the way the world is within space & time (space & time are molds into which we cast our experience), we may assume that a person really is free if it thinks of itself as free when it acts, for such a person must be aware of morality’s demands and is free to execute them.
3. Any person endowed with reason and with a will must think of itself as free, for reason would not be reason if it were subject to control by irrational forces from outside itself.
4. Acting morally has supreme moral worth because through it we are participating in a higher order of existence.

Therefore, we may presuppose that we think of ourselves as free, & we must keep in mind that from our autonomy flows the moral law & Categorical Imperative. To be free is to be moral & follow our rational principles [our own legislation & maxims] instead of just desires.

I. HUME’S MORAL DECISION-MAKING:

Hume’s ethics is ultimately based on feeling. natural, moral sentiment is where moral decision is grounded. Sympathy is a capacity, a psychological mechanism, to be moved or affected by the happiness & suffering others-to be pleased when others prosper when others suffer. This capacity is experienced to be a principle of human nature; it is a feature of any normal human being. Interestingly, Hume’s notion of sympathy sets him apart from the egoistic models of Plato & Aristotle.

3 Stages of Judgments:

Step 1: Sympathy induces in us to take into account of the happiness & suffering of others as well as our own.

Step 2: General standards correct the operation of sympathy so that we attach the same moral importance to the happiness or suffering of anyone, ourselves, or others, close to us or remote from us.

Step 3: In some cases we need to take into not account not merely the utility or particular acts, but the usefulness to society as a whole: system of general rules & conventions:

Virtues:

Qualities that are useful to others: Benevolence; justice; fidelity;

Qualities that are useful to possessor: Discretion; industry; frugality; strength of mind; good sense.

Qualities that are pleasurable to others: Politeness, modesty, decency;

Qualities that are pleasurable to possessor: Cheerfulness; magnanimity; courage; tranquility.

II. KANT’S MORAL DECISION-MAKING

1. Formulate a maxim that enshrines your reason or acting as you propose.

2. Recast your maxim as a universal law of nature that will govern all rational agents-all people will act.

3. Consider how your maxim is even conceivable in a world governed by rational agents.

4. Ask yourself whether you would or could rationally will to act on this maxim in such a world.

First formulation:

“Act in conformity with the maxim and the maxim only, that you can will at the same time a universal law.” This means that what I consider doing, it must be something that I can will or accept that all do (universal); it is replacing individual preferences with purely universal terms.

Second Formulation:

“Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always an end and never as a means only.” In sum, every person has intrinsic value & that humanity is a limit or constraint on our action.

Third formulation:

“Therefore, every rational being must act as if he were though his maxim always a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends.” In other words, we have to will what is consistent with the operations of the kingdom as a whole. In sum, all people should consider themselves as both members and heads.